

Terms of Reference

Leadership Council

Greater Victoria Early Childhood Community Coalition

Statement of Purpose

The following is a Statement of Purpose for the Leadership Council of the Coalition setting out the context for the development of these Terms of Reference.

A group of individuals who have a strong commitment to the importance of early childhood development have come together as a Coalition;

The constituency of the Coalition includes parents, professionals, stakeholders, educators, and consumers who want to focus attention on the importance of early childhood development;

Some of those individuals belonging to the Coalition have committed themselves to be part of the Leadership Council of the Coalition to oversee the efforts of the Coalition;

Therefore the Leadership Council has determined the necessity to develop a set of Guiding Principles, Terms of Reference and Congruence /Conflict of Interest Guidelines to provide guidance to the other members of the Coalition and the Task Forces to ensure clarity, fairness and commonality of purpose.

Guiding Principles for the Leadership Council:

- Be proactive advocates for the importance of early childhood development in accordance with the provisions of the Charter;
- Work to ensure all efforts of the members and Task Forces of the Coalition are consistent with the commitment in the Charter;
- Keep the focus of the Coalition as a whole on initiatives based on research and best practices that will foster healthy communities, families and children;
- Strive to ensure there is fair, transparent and accurate communication and decision making throughout the Coalition;
- Exercise discretion and due diligence with respect to all work undertaken in the name of the Coalition;
- Remember that teams and partnerships achieve greater success than individual effort;
- Be accountable and responsible to Coalition members;
- Promote innovation, new opportunities, coordination and integration to the benefit of all those working in early childhood development.

Membership of the Council

The membership of the Leadership Council will be made up of representatives in the following categories:

A. Essential Members

- Parent
- Aboriginal
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Vancouver Island Health Authority Family Health
- REACH [UVIC]
- Community Service Provider

B. Preferred Members

- Family Resource Programs
- School Districts
- Regional Childcare Council

C. Voluntary members

- These members will have a passionate interest in early childhood development and by personal preference choose to sit on the Council and are individuals who are not a representative of category listed in A or B.

Commitment

The following commitments will apply to members of the Leadership Council:

- The members of the Leadership Council agree to remain an active and contributing member of the Council for a period of a minimum of 2-3 years with a membership period that is staggered;
- The members understand that there will be at least one monthly meeting for both the Council and the Coalition;
- There is no maximum number of years for members of the Council;
- The present Council began its commitment in January 2003.
- Each member will liaise with a Task Force and commits to attending the Task Force meetings held in conjunction with the Coalition as a whole to foster clear communication between Task Forces and the Council; and
- The choice of Task Force is personal but the Council members will ensure there is at least one Council member for each Task Force.

Terms of Reference

The Leadership Council is the team dedicated to supporting the work of the Coalition as a whole and its Task Forces by undertaking the highlighted roles and respecting the following terms of reference:

Facilitation and Development

1. Responsible for taking direction from the Coalition as a whole, establish priority issues and develop strategies that proactively promote the work and image of the Coalition;
2. Responsible for setting the agenda and chairing the meetings of the Coalition and coordinating and supporting the administrative work of the Coalition including circulating minutes;
3. Respond to the needs of members of the Coalition and the Task Forces through effective communication and supportive research;
4. Encourage Task Forces to develop creative and diverse initiatives consistent with the Charter;
5. Coordinate work that overlaps between Task Forces to enhance their efforts and to ensure consistency;
6. Establish and promote a process of integrating the work of the Task Forces to avoid overlap, to maximize communication, to remove barriers, to enhance effort and to promote the integration of the work of the Coalition as a whole;
7. Proactively look for funding opportunities for the Coalition that promote early childhood development;

Policy Development

8. Consult with people who have knowledge of early childhood development within the community to enhance the work of the Coalition;
9. Develop a profile that articulates a clear and well developed understanding of what is meant by advocacy to increase the profile of children's issues;

10. Take responsibility for developing and implementing overall policy for the Coalition including ensuring each Task Force has its own Terms of Reference;
11. Act as a resource on early childhood development by providing information and assistance to interested parties;

Internal Accountability

12. Oversee the work of the Coalition and the Task Forces to ensure compliance with the commitments in the Charter;
13. Given the Charter and the priorities of the Coalition, be cognizant of the relevance of the direction of the work of Task Forces and provide guidance and support;
14. Take a leadership role in finding new members for the Coalition and identifying and establishing new Task Forces to focus the work of the Coalition [See Appendix A];
15. Identify different categories of membership in the Coalition including members, supporters, partners and affiliates and set any costs associated with membership;
16. Commit to a process by which the Leadership Council will have means to check with the membership of the Coalition as to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council, the relevance of the work of the Coalition and the overall progress being made for early childhood development;
17. Implement a process of regular reporting [quarterly or every six months] to enable all of the Task Forces to share their work with all of the members and to take a reading on the work of the Coalition as a whole;

External Accountability

18. Design a policy that clearly outlines the process by which requests are handled that come from Task Forces, from the community and to the Leadership Council;
19. Design and apply a process as to how to make recommendations to a funding body such as the Ministry of Children and Family Development regarding requests involving early childhood development;

20. Design the Process for Approval of Project Funding where the Coalition is the funder:
 - a. How to design an integrated model of sharing resources by working collaboratively with other host agencies such as the United Way [Partnerships in projects]
 - b. How to decide which projects are funded and who is the host agency [Conflict of Interest];

21. Ensure accountability to Coalition and the community at large by designing and applying the following:
 - a. Congruence/Conflict of Interest Guidelines
 - b. Financial statements for the budget of the Coalition
 - c. A Checklist for Task Forces to evaluate their work to ensure consistency with the Charter
 - d. Information for the Coalition members and the public in various mediums including decisions, minutes, policies and press releases of the Coalition;

Communications

22. Develop a policy to clarify the public relations role of the Leadership Council, the Communications Task Force and the Coalition members with respect to the role of spokesperson;

23. Collaborate with the Communications Task Force and give final approval to the Coalition's External Communications Plan that will include the following:
 - a. Responsible for identifying who the spokesperson for the Coalition will be identified in any particular circumstance
 - b. Oversight role, working in conjunction with the Communications Task Force and its plan, to give final approval to all public messages released from the Coalition
 - c. Design a publicity strategy that is proactive and consistent with the Charter and the plan of the Communications Task Force
 - d. Be diligent about identifying public relations opportunities of benefit to the Coalition as they arise and responding in a timely fashion
 - e. Clarify how letters of support and other public documents are vetted by the Communications Task Force and the Leadership Council respectively
 - f. Articulate a policy for how communications will be done when required on an urgent basis.